

proportion of these take the British East African route, where Mr. Percival assures us that migrants, especially Waders, are abundant in October and March.

79. *Salvadori on a new Albatross.*

[T. Salvadori. Specie apparentemente nuova del genere *Thalassogeron*. Boll. Mus. Zool. ed Anatomia comp. Univ. Torino, xxxvi. No. 638.]

Count Salvadori bases his new Albatross (*Thalassogeron desolationis*) on a specimen in the Turin Museum obtained at Desolation Island in the Magellan Straits, near the Pacific entrance. It is most nearly allied to *T. culminatus*.

80. *Thayer and Bangs on new Birds from China.*

[Descriptions of new Birds from Central China. By John E. Thayer and Outram Bangs. Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool. vol. lii. no. 8.]

From a collection of 3000 skins made by Mr. W. R. Zappey in the Province of Hupeh, Central China, the following are described as new:—*Callocalia fusciphaga* (qu. *fusciphaga*?) *capnitis*, *C. inopina*, *Turdus cardis lateus*, *Parus major artatus*, *Nucifraga hemispila macella*, *Cyornis tickelliae glaucicomans*, *Niltava lychnis*, and *Cyanoptila cumatilis*.

XXIV.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

WE have received the following letters addressed to the Editors:—

SIRS,—You will be glad to hear that the magnificent collection of African birds formed by the late Mr. Boyd Alexander during his travels, and bequeathed by him to the Natural History Museum, has now been handed over to that Institution by his brother, Mr. Robert Alexander, as executor.

It includes the collections formed during his expeditions

to the Cape Verde Islands, the Zambesi and Kafué Rivers, the Gold Coast Colony, and the Island of Fernando Po, as well as that made during his memorable journey in 1904-07 from the Niger to the Nile. It likewise contains the whole of the birds obtained during his last expedition to the islands of San Thomé, Principe, and Annobon in the Gulf of Guinea; on the Peak of Cameroon and mountains to the north of it, and in Wadai, up to the time of his death.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the value of the Alexander Collection to the Natural History Museum, for it supplies beautifully prepared and complete series of the Avifauna of islands and countries hitherto very imperfectly represented in the National Collection of Birds. The bequest comprises nearly four thousand bird-skins, and includes the type-specimens of no fewer than eighty-four species described for the first time by the late Mr. Alexander in his papers published in 'The Ibis' and elsewhere. Many of these new species were previously not represented in the National Collection.

I am, Sirs,

Yours &c.,

W. R. OGILVIE-GRANT.

British Museum (Natural History),

May 27th, 1911.

SIRS,—I have the pleasure of informing the readers of 'The Ibis' that, a few days ago, the Zoological Society of Munich received, in a small collection of birds from Katanga, Congo State, a fine example of *Baleniceps rex*. The bird, a perfectly adult male in ashy plumage, was shot, in July 1909, in the papyrus-swamps of Lake Kisale, on the Upper Lualaba (Congo), by Captain Michell and kindly presented by him to this Museum. I believe it is the first authentic record of this species from the Congo State, although its occurrence in that district was to be expected (see Sir Harry Johnston's note in 'Ibis,' 1902, p. 335), and extends its known range considerably to the south. According to Captain Michell, the Whale-headed Stork, named

“Mututa” by the natives, is very rarely met with on the Upper Congo.

I am, Sirs,
Yours &c.,

C. E. HELLMAYR.

Zoological Museum, Munich,
June 15th, 1911.

SIRS,—I read with much interest Mr. Bannerman’s letter from Gran Canaria. When in Gran Canaria in May 1910, I made a point of studying the bird-life. It was on the 14th of the month that I first saw the Teydean Finches—two male birds—at Teror, a village situated amongst the hills in the east of the island. It was on the mountain side where some fruit-trees were growing, and well below where there were pines. The Finches were sitting very quietly, and they only flew away when I approached nearer to get a better view of them.

I notice in Dr. Godman’s ‘Monograph of the Petrels’ that he says little of the habits of the Petrel *Oceanodroma castro*. I had these birds under my observation for a whole day in the Canary seas—the 5th of May, 1910. I first noticed them when about 75 miles off Madeira. Sometimes only one and sometimes four together were in the wake of the vessel; they were by no means shy, and frequently came so close that you could see their eyes. They kept flitting athwart the wake of the steamer most of the day; they had all the action of the House-Martin (*Hirundo urbica*) and were like magnified forms of it. They never flew more than seven feet or so from the surface of the water; I never saw them alight on the sea. I never heard them making any sound.

I am, Sirs,
Yours &c.,

WILLIAM SERLE.

The Manse,
Duddingston, Edinburgh,
June 13th, 1911.

SIRS,—Some time ago Mr. Eagle Clarke took to Tring the wing of a small species of *Phylloscopus* in order to identify the bird to which it belonged, but there was no species represented in the Tring Museum with which it could be compared. I have several times told Mr. Eagle Clarke that I was myself personally satisfied that I had diagnosed it correctly as belonging to the rare *P. neglectus* of Hume, which that ornithologist found in Cashmere. I have the other wing here. It absolutely agrees in the formula of the wing-pattern with Mr. H. E. Dresser's formula given in his 'Birds of the Eastern Palæarctic Region' (p. 98). The specimen of which these are the wings was shot in Tirce by Mr. Peter Anderson and sent in the flesh to me. But the Post Office stamper had utterly destroyed it, crushing in both head and most of the back, whilst part of the tail-feathers had been shot away. Only the wings were saved. The feathers of the lower back shewed a dusky *brownish olive*—not *greenish olive*. In the crushed head there was *just* the suspicion of a pale super-ciliary streak. There are no wing-bars.

Should my diagnosis, from the wing alone, be correct, I think I may claim to have here recorded the first occurrence of this species in Britain, and *perhaps* its first occurrence in Europe. The only specimens known to me are Hume's own specimens in the British Museum, and Dresser's, now in the Manchester Museum. Mr. T. Davidson—of Edinburgh—tells me that he has the eggs, but never obtained a specimen of the bird. I fancy that I once possessed a specimen, but whence it came I cannot now recollect.

I am, Sirs,

Yours &c.,

J. A. HARVIE-BROWN.

Dunipace House,
Larbert, N.B.,
17th June, 1911.

Mr. Brook's Paradise-birds.—Mr. E. J. Brook, of Hoddam Castle, Ecclefechan, N.B., who has a very fine collection of living Paradise-birds, writes to Mr. Ogilvie-Grant as follows :—

“ You have heard, I think, that my Rifle-birds (*Ptilorhis intercedens*) from British New Guinea, brought home by Mr. Goodfellow, have laid two eggs, both of which, however, were accidentally broken. I hope that the hen will lay again, but at present she shews very few signs of building a nest.

“ I have discovered another thing that will interest you, viz., that the hen of this bird has the same voice as the cock, only not so strong. She also dances and displays before the male with much the same actions as his. It is a very curious sight to see the two birds dancing a solemn minuet together.”

Col. Roosevelt's East-African Expedition.—We learn from the ‘ Smithsonian Report,’ lately issued, that the Zoological collections made by Col. Roosevelt's Expedition to East Africa have reached Washington in excellent condition, and have been deposited in the National Museum of the U.S. The collection of Birds is said to contain nearly 4000 specimens. We venture to express a hope that the Ornithologist who undertakes the determination and description of this large and important collection will be authorized to visit the collection at South Kensington, where there is a very extensive series of specimens from British East Africa and Uganda. The large private collection of Mr. F. J. Jackson is, we believe, also deposited there, and would be probably available for comparison.

The Expedition of the B.O.U. into Central New Guinea.—In consequence of the proved impossibility of reaching the snow-fields of New Guinea by the route on which the explorers had started, and which had been specially selected, as likely to be the most advantageous, it was resolved, after a final

unsuccessful effort, to give up the expedition and to return home. As the wet season was coming on, this was, probably, the wisest course to be pursued. The travellers are now, therefore, safe in England, and Capt. Rawling gave an account of their explorations and adventures at the meeting of the Royal Geographical Society held on July 3rd.

The collection of birds made by the expedition in New Guinea has reached the Natural History Museum, South Kensington. It contains about 2300 skins. Besides this there is a series of about 450 specimens from Ceram and of about 200 from Borneo.

Mr. Beebe's Expedition.—In the Fifteenth Report of the New York Zoological Society (1910) we are informed that funds have been provided by a private donor for an expedition to procure "living and dead specimens of the known species of Pheasants, and to study those birds in their native environment."

The expedition, under Mr. C. W. Beebe, Curator of Birds in the Society's Zoological Park, left New York on Dec. 29th, 1909, and began field-work in Ceylon. India was next visited, and the foot-hills of the Himalayas were searched for specimens. From India the party went to Singapore, making that city the base for excursions to Borneo, Java, and Burmah. The expedition is now, we believe, in Central China, and, after a visit to Japan, will return to New York this summer.

The Zoological Museum at Munich.—Under the energetic influence of the Custos of the Ornithological Section of the State Museum at Munich, Dr. C. E. Hellmayr, great additions have been lately made to the Collection of Birds, especially from South America. These are described in an article in the 10th volume of the 'Verhandlungen' of the Ornithological Society of Bavaria. In 1909 and 1910, 8735 specimens of Birds were added to the series, amongst which were 649 from Western Columbia, obtained by

Mr. Mervyn G. Palmer, and a portion of the collection made by the late Mr. Hoffmans on the Rio Madeira. Besides these, other contributions were received from Cayenne, Venezuela, Argentina, and Peru, and 636 skins from Lower Amazonia, amongst which were fourteen examples of the brilliant *Pipra opalizans* and other rarities.

Army Manœuvres in the New Forest.—An influentially signed memorial has been prepared with reference to the military manœuvres in the New Forest. The signatories point out that May and June are exactly those months of the whole year in which non-disturbance is of vital importance to the birds, insects, and plants which give to the New Forest its unique interest not only for men of science, but for the increasing numbers of their fellow-countrymen who take an interest in Natural History. The damage done by bodies of troops during this period must inevitably result in a destruction of the wild life of this area that can never again be repaired. While, therefore, they recognise on patriotic grounds that manœuvres must be held, they express the wish that wild tracts of the country other than the New Forest might be utilised for the purpose; but, if this cannot be, they desire to place on record their earnest hope that future manœuvres may at any rate be deferred until after July 15, when less harm would be done.

The letter is signed by Lord Avebury, Sir Archibald Geikie (President of the Royal Society), Sir E. Ray Lankester, Dr. Sidney Harmer, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, Sir Edmund Loder, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, Sir Joseph Hooker, Dr. D. H. Scott (President of the Linnean Society), Professor Sydney Vines, Professor Poulton, Dr. P. L. Sclater, Mr. Henry Elwes, Mr. E. G. Meade-Waldo, Mr. J. G. Millais, Mr. Eric Parker, Mr. J. E. Harting, and a large number of Members of the Zoological and Linnean Societies and of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.—'The Field,' June 10th, 1911, p. 1149.

New Work on South-American Birds.—Lord Brabourne, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U., and Mr. Charles Chubb, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. (of the Zoological Department, British Museum), have undertaken a difficult task—which, however, we trust they will be able to carry to a successful conclusion—the preparation of a new work on the Birds of South America. When completed it will consist of sixteen volumes of quarto size illustrated by coloured plates drawn by Grönvold. The first volume will contain a List of the Birds of South America. This is well advanced. Volume II., containing the first portion of the general work, will be issued early in 1912, and subsequent volumes at intervals of about nine months, each volume consisting of about 300 pages and of from 25 to 30 plates.

The only work on this large subject is the ‘Nomenclator Avium Neotropicalium’ of Sclater & Salvin, published in 1873. This gives a List of the Names of the Birds then known to the authors as being met with in South and Central America. It contains the names of 3560 species. But enormous additions, as we are all aware, have, of late years, been made to our knowledge of this subject—particularly since the introduction of “trinomials.” We suspect the named species and subspecies of the Neotropical Ornis are now likely to be at least 5000, even if they do not exceed that number.

The Honey-bird in North-East Rhodesia.—“One morning when we had paused for breakfast (near the River Chambezi), a little Honey-bird flew to a tree quite near me and began calling in a very excited manner. One of the boys whistled in reply. Then the bird flew away and the boy, quickly running, disappeared also. He did not return for quite an hour—in fact, I was just thinking of moving on without him, when with flashing eyes and a broad grin he appeared at my side and offered me a large honeycomb filled with honey. With gestures and whistlings he showed me how he had run, and how, finally, the little bird had led him to a tree up which he had climbed to find the honeycomb in a hole in the trunk.”—‘Viã Rhodesia,’ by Charlotte Mansfield, p. 268.